

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (previously presented) A method for secure mutual authentication comprising the steps of:
authenticating a customer at a first web site;
after authentication, receiving a selection from said customer at said first web site requiring transfer to a second web site, wherein said first web site is independent of said second web site;
after receiving said selection, generating an authentication message for said customer at said first web site, said authentication message devoid of intelligent information of said customer and comprising a permanent customer pseudonym that uniquely identifies said customer and is devoid of intelligent information of said customer; and
after generating said authentication message, transferring said authentication message from said first web site to said second web site for authentication of said customer by said second web site.
2. (canceled).
3. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of generating an authentication message further comprises randomly generating said customer pseudonym.
4. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of generating an authentication message further comprises incorporating a date/time stamp, a partner name and an optional uniform resource locator (URL) with a return address for said first web site into said authentication message.
5. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of generating an authentication message comprises incorporating a source identifier, a date/time stamp, an optional return URL, a customer pseudonym, a cryptographic key, a transaction identification and authenticated data for the first web site into said authentication message.

6. (original) The method of claim 5, wherein said authenticated data comprises said date/time stamp, said optional return URL, said customer pseudonym, said transaction identification, and a partner name.

7. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of authenticating said customer at said second web site using said authentication message generated by said first web site.

8. (original) A computer for performing the method of claim 1.

9. (original) A computer-readable medium having software for performing the method of claim 1.

10. (currently amended) A method for secure mutual authentication comprising the steps of:

receiving at a second web site an authentication message for a customer from a first web site, said customer previously authenticated by said first web site, said authentication message generated by said first web site, said authentication message devoid of intelligent information of said customer and comprising a permanent customer pseudonym that uniquely identifies said customer and is devoid of intelligent information of said customer, wherein said customer has not accessed said second web site prior to said receiving said authentication message at said second web site; and

authenticating said customer at said second web site using said authentication message generated by said first web site;

wherein said first web site is independent of said second web site.

11. (original) The method of claim 10, wherein the step of authenticating said customer at said second web site occurs when said customer has previously visited said second web site, and further comprising the step of prompting said customer to log in to said second web site when said customer has not previously visited said second web site.

12. (original) The method of claim 10, wherein said authentication message comprises a uniform resource locator (URL) with a return address for said first web site, and further comprising the step of returning said customer from said second web site to said first web site using said URL without further authentication by said first web site.

13. (original) The method of claim 10, further comprising the step of generating said authentication message for said customer at said first web site.

14. (original) A computer for performing the method of claim 10.

15. (original) A computer-readable medium having software for performing the method of claim 10.

16. (currently amended) A computer system for secure mutual authentication comprising a first web site and a second web site, wherein said first web site is independent of said second web site;

said first web site to:

authenticate a customer,

after said authentication, receive a selection from said customer requiring transfer to said second web site,

after receiving said selection, generate an authentication message, and

after generating said authentication message, transfer said authentication message from said first web site to said second web site, said authentication message devoid

of intelligent information of said customer and comprising a permanent customer pseudonym that uniquely identifies said customer and is devoid of intelligent information of said customer; and

said second web site to receive said authentication message for said customer from said first web site and authenticate said customer using said authentication message generated by said first web site.